

OUR AVIATION BRIGADE IS DEPLOYING OCONUS, WHAT BOOTS CAN WE WEAR?

The Army Aviator traditionally had unique equipment requirements to those of their mounted and dismounted Soldier brethren. This philosophy and the Aviator's unique operational environment led to footwear choice being dictated by Army Regulation (AR) 95-1. This regulation stipulated only all leather boots were approved while performing flight duties. The development of new materials and the efforts of military equipment developers and testers resulted in the "all leather boots" requirements of AR 95-1 being waived.

AIRCREW ALL LEATHER BOOT REQUIREMENT WAIVED

In Nov and Dec 2002, MAJ General Curran issued a pair of memoranda to Active and Reserve Component Aviation Brigade Commanders that specifically allowed for wearing of both the new, black-color US Army Infantry Combat Boot and the USAF Tan Flyer's Boot. Both of these boots had an upper constructed of both nylon and leather as well as integrated safety features such as limited flame resistance, conductive heat resistance and liquid penetration resistance. This boot design not only passed the required safety criteria for aviation use, they provided better protection than the all leather boot.

In the August 2003 issue of PS Magazine, there was an information brief that informed Army Aviators that the two authorized non all-leather boots available to them were the Belleville model 700 (black) and 790 (desert) boots. Times change and the Army acquisition system evolves to meet the war fighter's need. While the Belleville boots are still approved they are no longer the only game in town.

In Feb 2005, Brigadier General Sinclair issued an updated memorandum to Active and Reserve Component Aviation Brigade Commanders that allowed for the wearing of the tan-colored Army Combat Boot (Temperate Weather) [ACB(TW)] in addition to the black US Army Infantry Combat Boot previously authorized in Dec 2002. At one time one of the authorized boots was the USAF Tan Color Flyer's boot. Again, times change and the USAF Tan Color Flyer's boot is no longer authorized and if you attempt to order that boot style, the order will be cancelled.

WHAT IS APPROVED FOR THE AVIATOR TODAY?

Currently only two non all-leather boots are authorized for aircrew use. One is the US Army Infantry Combat Boot – Type I (Black), the other is the ACB(TW). Confusion exists over the black ICB and the ACB(TW) primarily because they are both manufactured by multiple contractors. The black ICB has been manufactured by three separate contractors (Bates, Belleville and Rocky) and the ACB(TW) has been contracted by five separate contractors (Addison, Bates, Belleville, Rocky and Wellco). While all of these boots are required to meet the same specifications, each contractor has separate internal/commercial names or model numbers for the military ACB(TW) boots.

To requisition the black ICB or ACB(TW) you need to use the appropriate National Stock Numbers (NSN's). For the Desert Tan color boot alone there are 126 different NSN's and space in this article precludes listing these. The Combat Readiness Center (CRC) will be posting the NSN's on their website at www.crc.army.mil and the US Army Aeromedical Research Laboratory (USAARL) will be posting the NSN's on their website at www.usaarl.army.mil.

COMMERCIAL BOOTS vs MILITARY BOOTS

If you requisition the ACB(TW) using the NSN's you will get a boot authorized for Aircrew use. If you chose to order ACB(TW) boots commercially the following are the commercial names or model number designations:

Table of Commercial ACB(TW) Boot Manufacturers and Models

Manufacturer	Desert Model	Black Model
Addison	ICT	Not applicable
Bates	E01129	E01500
Belleville	790	700
Rocky	790G	Not applicable
Wellco	ACBTW	ICB Black



ACB(TW) Boot Desert Color

GETTING MORE FROM YOUR BOOTS

The condition of your boots can often determine whether or not your feet will have a pain-free day. This fact combined with the difficulty of replacing your boots, especially while deployed, should prompt one to ask, "Are there ways to extend the life of my boots?" As with almost everything there are maintenance techniques you can use to extend the serviceable life of your boots. Your Combat Boots are designed to be easy to care for. The nylon quarter side panels are as strong as leather and will last if cared for properly. When cleaning leather or Cordura nylon it is recommended to first use a damp towel, or even your socks to wipe off the majority of the loose dirt and debris on the outside of your boots after each use. Second, you should brush the outside surface with water and a stiff nylon bristle brush to remove the embedded soil or dust. An old toothbrush works well for this and you should not scrub the boots harder than you would

your own skin. If additional, more stringent cleaning is necessary, only water-soluble cleaning products should be used as oil- or alcohol-based cleaning products may damage your boots.

During routine wear, perspiration permeates the boot material. Your boots should be allowed to dry at room temperature. If the boots are not permitted to dry bacteria can form within the boot. Having a second pair of boots will allow you to rotate your boots so you never wear the same pair two days in a row. Socks need to be worn in your boots and the best materials for socks are either a wool or wool blend. Avoid cotton socks because the hydroscopic properties of cotton can result in blisters and/or cold, wet feet.

THE FUTURE

Realizing approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of all the bones in the Soldier's body are in their feet, the Army spends a considerable amount of money and effort to ensure you are supplied with the best boot available. Due to continual improvements in technology the Aircrew approved boot list is subject to change and we will attempt to report any changes as they take place. For now, this review of Aircrew approved boots, National Stock Number (NSN) information and maintenance tips will assist you in making informed decisions regarding boot acquisition and care, making you combat ready.

Special thanks goes to Mike Holthe (Footwear Project Engineer PM-CIE), John Jolly (PM Air Warrior), Joe Licina (USAARL), and John Popovich (DCD) for their assistance with this undertaking.

If you have comments, suggestions, or questions concerning this article the POC at CRC is: christopher.trumble@crc.army.mil.

FOOTWEAR MANUFACTURERS	
ADDISON SHOE COMPANY POB 38, 1421 N. Falls Blvd. Wynne, AR 72396 PH: 800 201 2511 PH: 870 238 2331 FAX: 870 238 5942 WWW.ADDISONBOOT.COM EMAIL: dstark@addisonboot.com	BATES FOOT WEAR Wolverine World Wide, Inc. 9341 Courtland Drive Rockford, MI 49351 www.wolverineworldwide.com www.batesfootwear.com
BELLEVILLE SHOE COMPANY 100 Premier Dr, Belleville, IL 62220 PH: 800 376 6978 PH: 618 233 5600 FAX: 618 233 5617 www.bellevilleshoe.com	ROCKY OUTDOOR GEAR 39 East Canal Street Nelsonville, Ohio 45764 PH: 740.753.1951 www.rockyboots.com
WELLCO ENTERPRISES INC. 150 Westwood Circle Waynesville, NC 28786 PH: 800 840 3155 PH: 828 456 3545 http://wellco.com EMAIL: sales@wellco.com	
Authorized repairs and resole of Wellco boots:	
Aberdeen Shoe & Repair 17 Howard Street Aberdeen, MD 21001 PH: 866-266-8349 PH: 410-272-0383 Fax: 410-272-2627 www.aberdeenshoe.com EMAIL: info@aberdeenshoe.com	Military Boot Repair 7134-B Lineweaver Rd. Warrenton, VA 20187 PH: 800.876.7463 www.militarybootrepair.com EMAIL: info@militarybootrepair.com